

# Cultural CONNECTION

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COUNTY OF ORANGE  
HEALTH CARE AGENCY

## FOURTH ANNUAL MULTICULTURAL CONFERENCE 2003

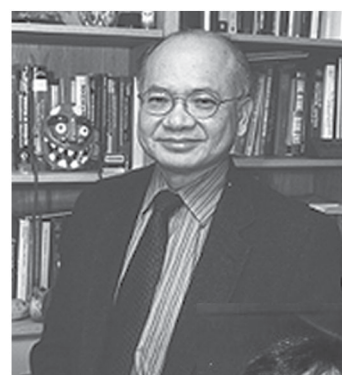
The Fourth Annual Multicultural Conference: A Proud Past, A Powerful Future took place at the Irvine Marriott on March 12, 2003. The annual event sponsored by the Orange County Health Care Agency and Pacific Clinics drew some 500 participants from all over the State. Headlining this event was Dr. Stanley Sue, University California, Davis and one of the four science editors of the Surgeon General's report on Mental Health addressing "Culture, Mental Health & Treatment: Controversies from the Surgeon General's Report." Dr. Keh Ming Lin of UCLA followed him, discussing "Ethnicity and Psychopharmacology."

Mental health clinicians, direct consumers, family members and the community at large attended three different sessions, comprising a total of 18 workshops that addressed a multitude of topics. These included such issues as: "Understanding Vietnamese Families," "Increasing Cultural Awareness Between the Police & the Community," "Medication Use & Misuse in the Elderly," "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Questioning Adolescents," and "Issues on HIV Prevention for Latinos Living in the U.S." to name a few.

Nationally known speakers were involved to share the most recent research findings with regards to consumers from diverse backgrounds. Presenters included: Dr. Christine Browning from UCI, Dr. Clayton Chau from the Orange County Health Care Agency, Xavier Espinosa of Saint Joseph's Hospital

and the OC Mental Health Board, Dr. Patrick Koga of Tulane University, Dr. Bill Liu of the Orange County Health Care Agency, Dr. Matthew Mock from Berkley Mental Health, Dr. Michael Smith of UCLA, Josie T. Romero of JTR & Assoc., and Anna Yeakley from CSULB.

This annual event is indicative of Orange County's commitment to enhance and build upon the multicultural skills of staff and clinicians as well as further the development of best practices that include our diverse communities. Thanks to all who attended and we look forward to seeing you again next March!



Keh Ming Lin



Stanley Sue

## Spotlight on Excellence Awardees

### JANUARY 2003—SHOLEH ASKARI

Ms. Askari has worked for the Health Care Agency for the past three years and currently serves as an Office Technician for Alcohol & Drug Abuse Services at the Perinatal Program in Aliso Viejo. She immigrated to the United States in 1987 from Iran following the Iranian Revolution. Per her colleagues, "Sholeh goes out of her way to tend to the needs of all people and demonstrates cultural sensitivity in all that she does."



*Rafael D. Canul, Christine Ford, Sholeh Askari, Ronnie Kelley, Doug Barton*

### FEBRUARY 2003— TUONG C. NGUYEN, PhD

Dr. Tuong has worked for the Health Care Agency for the past 17 years, currently serving as the Service Chief of the Pacific Asian Unit at the Santa Ana clinic. He came to the United States in 1975 from Vietnam, where he had been an ESL instructor. Dr. Tuong began working in the U.S. as Executive Director for the Vietnamese Community of Orange County, when he became aware of the mental health needs of the Vietnamese community. He then went back to school to complete his Ph.D., which he received from the California Graduate Institute in 1986. Per his colleagues, "the consumers served at his clinic truly see themselves as part of a family."



*Ronnie Kelley, Tuong Nguyen, Rafael Canul*

### MARCH 2003— CHRISTINE FORD, LCSW

Ms. Ford has been employed with the County of Orange since 1991. She began her tenure with the SSA as a Senior Social Worker who then transferred to the Health Care Agency in Behavioral Health as a Care Coordinator. Currently a Service Chief in Alcohol & Drug Abuse Services, her colleagues cite her desire to address all aspects of a consumers culture when providing treatment as unflinching, and her commitment to treating all consumers with dignity as essential.



*Rafael Canul, Ronnie Kelley, Christine Ford, Mary Hale, Sandra Fair*

*(Continued on page 6)*

Story Corner

## THE MARKET

By M. E.

**T**he market at my village in Vietnam opened twice a week, on Thursdays and Sundays in a field about one-half the size of a football field. We could find everything from joss sticks to candles, from cooking food to live animals, from doctors to fortune tellers.

One Sunday after church, before we entered the market, my mother abruptly pulled my arm and gently forced me to a halt; she half-sat and half-knelt on the ground bringing her face close to mine. Her eyes narrowed, she solemnly whispered,

"Huong, daughter, the famine isn't over yet; don't forget to watch Mama's basket while I am busy bargaining and choosing food."

"Of course, Mama!" I replied.

My mother's eyes widened again as she nodded at me approvingly. Bravely following my mother into the chaotic crowd and its clamor, I felt as proud and confident as a good soldier on a trusted mission did. I skipped into the market, and had I known how to whisper like my cousin, I would have done so.

Our first purchase was a kilogram of pork shoulder since my father's favorite dish was sweet and sour pork. While my mother was getting her change, I hung on to our bamboo basket. Suddenly a middle-aged lady in a pretty blue blouse stopped and smiled at me, but I didn't smile back as I would usually do. To my suspicious eyes, her glance at our basket seemed threatening. My stomach squirmed! I reached out for my mother's hand and shook it violently until she turned around to look at me. I let go of her hand, and still speechless, I pointed my little finger at

the "blue" lady's face. My mother looked at the lady and then at me again, and for a moment, I thought she was either embarrassed or nervous. To my surprise, my mother smiled charmingly at the lady; the lady smiled back and she stroked my long, silky, black hair before walking away.

When we reached the vegetable corner, my mother, with the same gesture as before (except her eyes didn't narrow this time), whispered into my ear, "Huong, daughter, the thieves usually wear ragged clothes."

"Yes, Mama." I nodded.

We went on with our purchases while this time I carefully watched out for suspects with ragged clothes.

We bought beef, shrimp, dried mushrooms, vegetables and fresh fruits. The last item was cooked rice noodles for my favorite dish, "Bun Bo" (fried beef and noodles). When my mother pressed our noodles into the over-filled basket, I let go a sign of relief and followed her happily outside the market area.

I envisioned our dinner that night and could almost smell the fried beef with onions and feel the taste of the coarsely pounded fried peanuts sprinkled over the bowl of "Bun Bo." My mother mixed the best "Nuoc Mam" (mixed fish sauce with water, sugar, vinegar or fresh lemon juice, and freshly crushed garlic). My mouth watered.

I was trying to swallow my saliva when my mother's piercing scream brought my attention back to the surrounding market. Following my mother's scream was the thudding sound of her basket dropping to the ground; our purchases scattered all over. Following

the strings of noodles on the ground, my eyes found two filthy feet with long toenails filled with dirt. The skinny body (also covered with dirt) was wrapped in rags, and one of the filthy hands was full of noodles; the other was helping to stuff the delicious strings of noodles into the widely-opened mouth. The two big, hollow eyes stared at us without blinking once. To my horror, at his touch the milky noodles turned brown.

By the time I had recovered from my shock, my mother had already gathered the rest of her purchases and shoved them all into the bamboo basket. Her face twisted as if in pain, and she muttered under her breath as if she was saying a prayer, but I knew it was the opposite.

When my mother picked up the banana leaves used for wrapping food, they still contained some left over noodles with brown and black marks, she hesitated for a second; then to my amazement she threw them at the robber. From one shock to another, I saw the man expertly catch the banana leaves with just one of his empty hands.

My mother was too angry to return to the market for another bag of noodles, but I couldn't have cared less because I had lost my appetite for my favorite dish, "Bun Bo."



## Cultural Activities

### NAMI ORANGE COUNTY

**October 4-5, 2003****Bipolar Child Conference at UCLA Extension**Email: [kedwards@unex.ucla.edu](mailto:kedwards@unex.ucla.edu)

Phone: 310-525-9631

### CENTER CONNECTION

**August 16, 2003****Orange County Dyke March (Costa Mesa)****August 21-24, 2003****North American Conference on Bisexuality****September 10, 2003****A Night at the Improv**

Join the Fair Housing Council of OC to raise funds to support equal housing opportunities.

7:30-10 p.m. —Irvine Spectrum Improv

Ticket price \$20 (100% tax deductible)

Call (714) 569-0823 x217

## THE MULTI-ETHNIC BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES TASK FORCE

Our mission is to advocate for the development, implementation and evaluation of high quality, culturally competent, behavioral health services capable of meeting the dynamic and diverse needs of all ethnic groups in Orange County.

Membership is open to various County Behavioral Health Services departments, private practice and community based agencies involved in providing behavioral health services, direct clients and/or their interested family members of behavioral health services.

Meetings: First Wednesday of every month

Contact Info: Multi-Ethnic Behavioral Health Services Task Force Office  
405 W. 5th St., Rm 685  
Santa Ana, CA 92701  
714-834-5481 (phone)  
[jgriset@hca.co.orange.ca.us](mailto:jgriset@hca.co.orange.ca.us)

Upcoming 2003 Trainings:

August: Cross Cultural Adoptions

September: Mental Illness Differences when Different Cultures Come to the U.S.

October: PTSD and How it Affects Different Communities

November: Substance Abuse Patterns in Different Communities



## CALIFORNIA LEGISLATION

The Following State Assembly Bills (AB) and State Senate Bills (SB) are currently at various stages of the legislature. They are of interest to multicultural populations. Please note that "chaptered" refers to a bill that has passed the legislature and has been approved by the Governor. It then receives a chapter number and then becomes a statute, and part of the California Code.

### **AB 59- AUTHORED BY DYMALLY**

Establishes a California Commission for the presentation of African American history, culture and institutions in State government and consists of specific membership headquartered in the California African American Museum.

### **AB 292- AUTHORED BY YEE**

Was recently amended and is set for a hearing with the Senate Judicial Committee. This bill prohibits use of children (under age 15) as interpreters for state or local governmental agencies, or any other agency that receives state funding.

### **AB 801- AUTHORED BY DIAZ**

Is set to be heard by the Business & Professional Committee. This bill would add to the local Business & Professional code that local medical societies of the California Medical Association would operate a voluntary competency program for physicians that consists of classes to teach language and cultural practices and beliefs. For Spanish, the program shall be developed with direct input from the

physician groups in Mexico who serve the same immigrant population.

### **ACR 57- AUTHORED BY CORBETT**

This Assembly Bill was chaptered to identify March as Irish-Heritage Month.

### **ACR 65-**

This Assembly Bill was chaptered to identify the week of May 4 through May 10 as Cinco de Mayo Week.

### **ACR 108- AUTHORED BY KEHOE, GOLDBERG, LAIRD & LENO**

This Assembly Bill was chaptered to identify June as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Pride month.

### **SCR 6- AUTHORED BY BATTIN**

This Senate bill was introduced to identify September 15 through October 15 as Hispanic Heritage Month.

### **SCR 13-**

This Senate Bill was chaptered to identify March as Women's History Month

### **SCR 19- AUTHORED BY ALARAN**

This Senate Bill was introduced to identify May as World Language & Culture Month

## OPEN HOUSE

The Cultural Competency & Multi Ethnic Services department held their annual Open House on June 24, 2003. The office welcomed a few hundred visitors who met and familiarized themselves with all aspects of the Behavioral Health Services department. People toured the Resource Library, and sought consultation on their various programs that could benefit from a multicultural perspective. The guests were treated to a diverse luncheon buffet from staffs various ethnic backgrounds. Rather than attempt to familiarize guests with foods from around the world, all members of the department chose to share some of their favorite dishes from their own cultures. Music and traditional clothing were also shared.

(Continued on page 6)



## SPOTLIGHT ON EXCELLENCE AWARDEES

(Continued from page 2)

### APRIL 2003—EVANGELINA PEREZ

Ms. Perez has worked for the Health care Agency for the past two years. She currently serves as an Office Technician at the Westminster Alcohol & Drug Abuse Services Clinic. Born in Mexico, she came to the United States in 1984 and is currently studying at Santa Ana College, hoping to pursue a career in nursing or occupational therapy. Per her peers, "Eva is kind and considerate to everyone. She goes above and beyond the call of duty to assist consumers in receiving additional resources in their native languages."



*Rafael Canul, Sandra Fair, Evangelina Perez, Rose Danien, Ronnie Kelley*

### JUNE 2003—MARY MACIAS

Ms. Macias began her career with the Health Care Agency 15 years ago. She currently serves as an Office Technician for Alcohol & Drug Abuse Services. She has worked at the clinic sites, with the Penal Code 1000 Drug Diversion Program and Drug Court. Per her colleagues, "Mary has a quiet sensitivity about her that is endearing to staff and consumers. She always goes out of her way to help others, especially those that struggle to access services due to language barriers."



*Sandra Fair, Diane Holley, Mary Macias, Ronnie Kelley, Rafael Canul*

## OPEN HOUSE

(Continued from page 5)

The Cultural Competency department attends to, monitors and implements a number of State and Federal mandates with regards to culture/linguistics. In its fourth year of existence, the department has trained over 3,500 participants on various cultural issues.

Thanks to all who visited with us!



## Hmong Health Survey

SARA MURRIETA, PhD, MPH

*HMONG HEALTHCARE PRACTICES IN ORANGE COUNTY: Results From the Hmong Health Survey is in print and on the web.*

The Hmong Health Survey initiated by Chongge Vang of Orange County Public Health/Health Promotion Multi-Ethnic Health Education Services is the first to be conducted in Orange County of Hmong Americans. The 105 Hmong individuals surveyed were all born in Asia. Travers Ichinose oversaw the epidemiological aspects of the study.

The Hmong are a people with a history of migration in Asia of over 5,000 years. Twenty years ago as a result of their aid to the U.S. in the War in Vietnam, about 13,000 immigrated to Orange County. More than 10,000 have left the county. The Hmong can pose a challenge to the Western health care system. They have maintained their integrity as a people and their memory of their 5,000-year-old traditions of life and death. Now in the United States, poverty, no health insurance, lack of education and linguistic isolation can further prevent them from readily joining the mainstream. When feeling ill, they may first resort to their ancient healing customs of consulting their elders or shaman, in utilizing herbs, or in engaging in physical therapies such as coining, massage, etc.

Results From the Hmong Health Survey disclosed that Hmong Americans need to be approached in a language that they can understand and in a cultural environment that they can trust in order to become more integrated into the U.S. education, employment, and health care systems.

HMONG HEALTHCARE PRACTICES IN ORANGE COUNTY: Results From the Hmong Health Survey, Summer 2002 can be found on the web at: <http://www.ochealthinfo.com/public/ethnic/downloads.htm>.



### Spotlight on Excellence



Do you work with someone who exemplifies Cultural Competency? Someone who is both sensitive and respectful to persons of all cultures, whether colleague or consumer? If so, the Cultural Competency Program would like to formally acknowledge these individuals.

Please fill out the necessary information and pony it back to us and we'll make sure this employee or consumer gets acknowledged in our next newsletter. Our pony address is 38-P.

Awardees will be honored at the County's Mental Health Advisory Board Meeting. Thank you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Work address/ Pony address: \_\_\_\_\_

Discipline: \_\_\_\_\_

Why you believe he/she is Culturally Competent:

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Example of dedication to Cultural Competency:

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## Cultural CONNECTION

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